

Sen. Kit Bond's testimony before the MRC

General Riley, members of the Mississippi River Commission (MRC), thank you for the opportunity for my District Office Director, Tom Schulte, to present my comments on my behalf to the MRC.

Let me first convey my congratulations to R.D. James for being nominated by President Bush for another term to the MRC.

R.D.'s knowledge of the Mississippi River & Tributaries is a real asset to the MRC as we seek to balance environmental concerns, flood control, navigation and, most importantly, protect the citizens within the boundaries of the Mississippi Valley Division.

Missouri is at the crossroads, the heart of our nation's tributaries. I am honored to represent Missouri on several key U.S. Senate Committees that impact this tremendous asset, and look forward to the challenge of seeing that the Show Me State and heartland of America receives the justifiable resources that protect our environment, jobs and vast natural resources.

If the wisdom of the St. Louis-Post

Dispatch were relied upon, Missouri's Bootheel would be a swampland - land that my good friend, Colonel Clyde Southern, has stated time and again would be a desolate wildland for snakes and mosquitoes to reign if radical views were actually implemented.

At times one wonders whether the Post Dispatch realizes commodities are grown in rows by hardworking farmers and not aisles stocked by clerks.

Our nation is blessed with vast resources, resources we must protect, nurture and preserve for future generations.

Irrational agendas by radical interest groups many times hinder rational decisions that protect people, enhance the environment, allow progress and prosperity to be sought in harmony.

Many well planned Corps projects, like the St. John Bayou / New Madrid Floodway, are held hostage by bureaucratic foot-dragging.

Personally, I sometimes feel like a timely, well placed drop-kick might be the answer to resolve unnecessary

bureaucratic gridlock. Obviously, St. Johns / New Madrid project is not a sporting event, but if it were, we're in triple overtime.

There are numerous projects like Bois Brule, the Steele Bypass, Elks Chute, North and South Gabouri, the Dutchtown Levee, our Ports and numerous others which my staff are working with various Corps District to bring to fruition.

While the time doesn't allow comments on each one of these individually today, there is one common denominator, each project impacts the lives and livelihood of people. Rest assured, my staff and I enjoy the opportunity from time to time to have an energetic discussion with Corps Districts on various project concerns, and look forward to more in the future.

Thank you for the opportunity to reflect on the important task before us and best wishes to the MRC and the many dedicated people associated with projects within the MVD.

Christopher S. Bond